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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/027,681	12/21/2001	T. Daniel Gross	033297-120	2036

57360 7590 04/17/2007
WORKMAN NYDEGGER
1000 EAGLE GATE TOWER,
60 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84111

EXAMINER

YABUT, DIANE D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3734

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	04/17/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/027,681

Applicant(s)

GROSS ET AL.

Examiner

Diane Yabut

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 1/23/2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 3-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 3-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 March 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to applicant's amendment received on 23 January 2007. The examiner acknowledges the amendment to the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1 recites the limitation "the side" in line 3 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 3-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Buelna (U.S. Patent No. **5,242,459**) in view of **Andreas** (U.S. Patent No. **5,797,929**)

Claim 3: Buelna discloses a suture trimmer comprising a shaft **16** having a proximal end and a distal end and an axis therebetween, a suture retainer **12** having a groove **58** formed in the side thereof, the groove **58** in communication with an opening **38** formed in the side of the shaft, the opening **38** disposed proximal the distal end (Figures 1 and 4). Buelna discloses a cutting member **30** and the suture retainer **12** both slidably

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disposed within the shaft **16** (col. 4, lines 7-13). Buelna also discloses a handle assembly, the handle disposed adjacent the proximal end of the shaft (Figure 1). Buelna discloses the handle assembly further including a first lever **60** and a second lever **62** that are operatively coupled to the suture retainer and cutting member, respectively (col. 5, lines 49-52 and lines 55-58). Buelna discloses the claimed device except for the shaft **16** having the groove formed in a side thereof, the groove being in communication with an opening formed in the side of the shaft, although as mentioned above does disclose the suture retainer **12** having the groove and opening.

Andreas teaches a suturing instrument **100** with an outer shaft **104** having a groove (distal end, by element **112**) formed in a side thereof, the groove being in communication with an opening **120** formed in the side of the shaft (Figure 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to provide the groove in communication with an opening in a shaft, as taught by Andreas, to Buelna since it was well known in the art to have a receiving opening and groove along a external surface of a suturing instrument in order to readily load sutures onto the device so that they may be effectively manipulated.

Claim 4: Buelna discloses a biasing member **40**, the biasing member **40** in communication with the cutting member **30** (col. 4, lines 32-36 and col. 5, lines 3-9).

Claim 5: Buelna discloses the opening **38** having a proximal edge and the cutting member **30** having a sharpened edge **36** which is adapted to engage the proximal edge to sever suture when suture is disposed through the groove and opening (col. 5, lines 53-55).

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Claim 6: Buelna discloses a sharpened edge **36** of a cutting member **30** which is retracted within the shaft until it is withdrawn by applying a force to the second lever **62** (col. 5, lines 49-52).

Claim 7: Buelna discloses a suture that is disposed within the groove **58** and opening **38** by retracting the suture retainer within the shaft **16** by applying a force to the first lever **60** (col. 5, lines 29-33).

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to Claims 3-7 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Diane Yabut whose telephone number is (571) 272-6831. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 9AM-4PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Hayes can be reached on (571) 272-4959. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

DY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MJ Hayes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

MICHAEL J. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER